

Message Text

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15
ACTION INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /027 W
----- 071351

P R 300449Z SEP 76
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2064
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE WELLINGTON 3668

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINR, NZ
SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION - NEW ZEALAND'S AMBASSADOR ERIC
HALSTEAD

REF: ROME 15819

1. ERIC HENRY HALSTEAD, APPOINTED NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR TO ITALY
SEPTEMBER, 1976; AMBASSADOR TO BANGKOK JULY 1970 TO SEPTEMBER
1973. INDEPENDENT BUSINESS CONSULTANT IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE,
FINANCE AND ECONOMICS IN NEW ZEALAND FROM SEPTEMBER 1973 TO
AUGUST, 1976.

2. HALSTEAD, ORIGINALLY AUCKLAND COMPANY DIRECTOR AND PUBLIC
ACCOUNTANT; MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT (NATIONAL PARTY) FROM 1949 TO 1957.
APPOINTED TO THE CABINET IN 1954 AND SERVED AS MINISTER OF SOCIAL
SECURITY, MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME
MINISTER (1954); MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE AND CUSTOMS
(1956-57).

3. BORN 1912, HALSTEAD HOLDS MASTER OF ARTS WITH HONORS AND
BACHELOR OF COMMERCE FROM AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY. HE SERVED IN
WORLD WAR II FOR FIVE AND HALF YEARS AND IS MARRIED WITH
THREE SONS, ONE DAUGHTER. RECREATIONAL INTERESTS ARE GIVEN AS
GOLF, TENNIS, BRIDGE AND GARDENING.

4. HALSTEAD IS KNOWN AS A CLEVER AND ABLE MAN WHO ENJOYED
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POLITICAL LIFE AND WHO WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY HAVE BECOME PROMINENT

IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT HAD HE RETAINED HIS SEAT.
BIOGRAPHIC REPORT OF 1970 SAYS HE "PAYS LITTLE TRIBUTE TO
HIDEBOUND TRADITIONS", IS "UNRESERVED IN HIS LIKING FOR U.S. AND IN
HIS GENERAL ENDORSEMENT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY." HE HAS APPARENTLY
HAD DISTRACTORS WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY, HOWEVER, AND IS REGARDED
BY SOME AS IMPETUOUS AND INTELLECTUALLY ARROGANT (ALLEGEDLY
WITHOUT REASON).

5. WHILE HALSTEAD IS NOT KNOWN TO EMBASSY AMERICAN STAFF,
HE IS KNOWN TO THE SENIOR LOCAL OF EMBASSY'S ECON/COM
SECTION (FORMERLY GNZ TRADE COMMISSIONER IN TOKYO AND WASHINGTON)
WHO SERVED UNDER HALSTEAD IN WELLINGTON WHEN HE WAS MINISTER OF
TRADE AND INDUSTRY. HE HAS COMMENTED THAT HALSTEAD WILL BE NO
MATCH, EITHER INTELLECTUALLY OR PERSONALLY, TO FORMER AMBASSADOR
P.N. HOLLOWAY. HALSTEAD HAS BEEN OUT OF LIMELIGHT FOR PAST THREE
YEARS AND REPORTEDLY HAUNTED HALLS OF PARLIAMENT IN
RECENT MONTHS SEEKING NEW POSTING. HE HAS GATHERED SOMEWHAT OF A
REPUTATION AS A MAN WHO PUTS HIS FOOT IN HIS MOUTH. RECENT
EDITORIAL CRITICISM HAS CITED HALSTEAD AS ONE OF
SEVERAL UNWISE, OVERSEAS POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS BY NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT.
SELDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE, BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976WELLIN03668
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760368-0679
From: WELLINGTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976091/aaaaaaek.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ROME 15819
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 MAY 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION - NEW ZEALAND'S AMBASSADOR ERIC HALSTEAD
TAGS: PINR, PDIP, NZ, IT, (HALSTEAD, ERIC)
To: ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006